

INFORMATION REPORT INFORMATION REPORT

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

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COUNTRY Rumania REPORT

SUBJECT Attitudes of the Rumanian People DATE DISTR. 7 June 1955

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1. The people of Rumania have remained bitterly anti-Communist despite all propaganda and repression. They oppose the Communist Government with an intensity and degree of unanimity almost unique among the peoples of Eastern Europe. Anti-Communist sentiment is intense among all classes and age groups, from the lowest paid workers to important bureaucrats in the government ministries. Visitors from the West are very popular and Rumanian nationals are eager to strike up conversations and describe their yearning for the West and their hatred of the Communists. Somewhat surprisingly, they often give vent to their feelings openly. In other satellite states the inhabitants also talk freely and make anti-Communist statements to Western visitors but they invariably stop talking as soon as one of their compatriots comes within earshot. Many Rumanians, on the other hand, speak against their government openly, even when several other Rumanians are taking part in the discussion. They do not appear to fear and respect their police as much as do the citizens of some of the other satellite states. Many also given the impression that they have reached a state of utter despair and that their future security is of small concern to them.
2. Most Rumanians complain chiefly about the standard of living, which has been depressed to a point where it is now shockingly low. In some cases, people live four or five to a single small room. Hygienic and health conditions are shocking. Food is of poor quality and is often scarce. Wages are so low in relation to prices that only the barest necessities of life can be purchased. The quality of the few available wares is extremely low. Practically all women are forced to work to help support their families. Very few buildings have been constructed or repaired since World War II and most old buildings show evidence of decay and dilapidation. Many factories, even the new ones built since the war, present signs of incredible waste and mismanagement. So many workers are employed in some factories that they literally get in each other's way. Absenteeism and slowdowns are common. Competent technicians are extremely scarce and

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working conditions are often unpleasant and unsanitary. Foreign technicians are amazed that anything at all can be produced under these conditions.

3. Practically all Rumanians contacted hope for and expect a major war in the near future. They seriously believe that the United States is planning and preparing for a war of liberation against the Soviets. They assume that the West German army is being recreated for this purpose and that the Americans will begin the war as soon as the Germany army is ready. West Germans, for this reason, are extremely popular in Rumania. They are often congratulated on the policy of Adenauer and are urged to get tougher with the Soviets and to complete their preparations so that the war can begin as soon as possible. Most Rumanians are confident that the Germans and Americans will dispose of the Soviets in short order and many people boldly announce their intention of sabotaging the Soviet war effort the first time a suitable opportunity presents itself. If foreign visitors describe the peaceful and defensive goals of the Atlantic alliance, most Rumanians simply refuse to listen. As far as they can see, a major war represents their only hope for liberation and they therefore pray for war. Even descriptions of the horrors of atomic warfare make no impression on many of them. They assert that they would welcome even atomic warfare if it would result in the liberation of their country from the Communists.
4. Practically everyone in Rumania listens to foreign radio broadcasts. Radio Free Europe is the favorite and its broadcasts are sometimes discussed openly. Most people are fairly well informed about the situation in the West and follow developments with interest. The recent defection of a Russian schoolboy in Berlin attracted great attention. Most people were furious when the boy was returned to the Soviets since they thought the Americans had returned him against his will. The fact that they boy had actually requested repatriation was apparently not made clear to them in propaganda broadcasts. The June 1953 riots in East Germany were also followed with great interest by the Rumanian population. Some Rumanians allege that if the riots in Germany had lasted a few days longer all Rumania would have been shaken by widespread rioting also.
5. Many Rumanians apparently base their expectations of an American war of liberation on RFE broadcasts. If these RFE broadcasts actually give Rumanians reason to expect liberation, and if liberation is not then forthcoming, there is a great danger that these broadcasts will do more harm than good. The Soviets have already made these mistake in Rumania. Their propaganda has been shown up as a clumsy tissue of lies so often that most Rumanians believe absolutely nothing that they read in the government papers or hear over the government radio. On the contrary, sardonic remarks about Soviet inventive prowess, for example, are especially common among the Rumanian people.
6. Churches in Rumania, especially during religious holidays, are crowded. People from all classes of society, including many young people and soldiers in uniform, take an active part in the church services.

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